

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

SECSTATE WASHDC 2555

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 6881

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, IR

SUBJ: IRANIAN ANXIETIES ABOUT LEBANESE SITUATION

REF: BEIRUT 7382

1. MFA DIRGEN FOR ASIA AND AFRICA SADRIEH REQUESTED POLCOUNS TO COME TO MFA "URGENTLY" JULY 16 TO DISCUSS SITUATION IN LEBANON. DURING SUBSTANTIVE PART OF MEETING HE SAID MFA HAD JUST RECEIVED TELEGRAM FROM IRANIAN AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT REPORTING THAT IN NUMEROUS RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH RESPONSIBLE, WELL-PLACED LEBANESE POLITICIANS ALL HAVE INDICATED GREAT PESSIMISM ABOUT FUTURE OF COUNTRY. THESE CONTACTS SAY THAT DESPITE PRESENT APPEARANCES LEBANON'S TROUBLES ARE FAR FROM OVER, AND THEY ARE INCREASINGLY WORRIED ABOUT DANGER NOT ONLY FROM PALESTINIANS BUT FROM MILITANT LEFTISTS OPERATING WITH CLANDESTINE SUPPORT FO "OUTSIDE POWERS". CHAMOUN, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD GOI AMBASSADOR HE SAW DANGER NOT ONLY FROM ACTIVITIES OF RADICAL LEFT WITH HELP OF OUTSIDE POWERS, BUT ALSO FROM INTENSE PERSONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POLITICIANS WHICH PREVENT THEIR TAKING ACTIONS IN NATIONAL INTEREST WHEN THAT WOULD CONFLICT WITH THEIR PERSONAL ADVANTAGE. THIS EGOCENTRISM SOMETIMES LEADS THEM TO COOPERATE WITH LEFTISTS THEY MIGHT OTHERWISE SHUN. LIBYANS AND IRAQIS ARE FANNING FIRES FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES AND ENCOURAGING COLLABORATION BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS. SADRIEH SAID LEBANESE PERSONALITIES CONTACTED BY GOI AMB BELIEVE THAT IF THIS COLLABORATION GETS MUCH MORE CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEHRAN 06881 170954Z

EXTENSIVE, MODERATES WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE TO TAKE SUCCESSFUL COUNTERACTION AND HOLD THINGS TOGETHER.

2. SADRIEH RECOGNIZES THAT LEBANESE POLITICIANS MAY BE OVER-

DRAMATIZING SITUATION TO ATTRACT HELP BUT BELIEVES WE CANNOT IGNORE POSSIBILITY THEIR ASSESSMENT MIGHT BE ACCURATE. HE WANTED TO CHECK HOW U.S. EVALUATES ACCURACY OF GOI AMBASSADOR'S REPORT AND GRAVITY AND IMMINENCE OF DANGERS FORESEEN. WHAT EVIDENCE DO WE HAVE OF FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR VARIOUS GROUPS AND OF OTHER OUTSIDE EFFORTS TO EXPLOIT TURMOIL? IF SITUATION IS ACTUALLY AS PORTRAYED, WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

3. ADMITTING OUR INFORMATION WAS NOT AS RECENT AS SADRIEH'S, POLCOUNS SAID WE OF COURSE HAD HEARD SIMILAR MISGIVINGS FROM NUMEROUS LEBANESE BUT TENDED NO TO TAKE AS GLOOMY A VIEW OF LEBANON'S PROSPECTS AS GOI AMBASSADOR SEEMS TO. CREATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY HAS LED TO CONSIDERABLE EASING OF SITUATION ALTHOUGH POTENTIAL FOR NEW DISRUPTIONS CERTAINLY REMAINED. IRAQIS AND LIBYANS WERE CLEARLY SUPPORTING SOME ELEMENTS BUT WE HAD NO EVIDENCE OF DIRECT RUSSIAN OR CHINESE INVOLVEMENT. POLCOUNS PROMISED TO TRANSMIT SADRIEH'S INFORMATION TO DEPT AND BEIRUT AND ASK FOR CURRENT EVALUATION.

4. REQUESTED ACTION: WOULD APPRECIATE ANY NECESSARY UP-DATING OF REFTTEL WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO SANITIZE FOR SADRIEH, AS WELL AS ANY OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION OR COMMENTS ON SUBJECT WHICH MIGHT BE PASSED TO MFA.

MIKLOS

CONFIDENTIAL

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